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SUNUNU: STATES SHOULD DECIDE WHERE HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT MONEY IS SPENT

Signs onto bill that provides states flexibility in the use of federal grant dollars

WASHINGTON, DC – Senator John Sununu (R-NH) today announced his support for legislation that will provide states with the flexibility to decide where federal homeland security grant resources are spent.

“This bill streamlines and strengthens the grant programs for states, making it easier for them to allocate funds where they are needed most,” said Sununu, a member of the Government Affairs committee, which oversees the Department of Homeland Security. “The bottom line - first responders and law enforcement personnel are on the front lines protecting our coastlines, borders, airports, and roadways. They should not be stuck in red tape waiting for the resources they need to do their job.”

The Bill, S. 838, will allow the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to grant states waivers to use the funds as they see fit. S. 838 was introduced by Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) on April 9, 2003, and has been referred to the Government Affairs Committee.

The federal government assists states and localities with training, purchasing equipment, conducting exercises, and planning through a grant program that is administered by the Office for Domestic Preparedness. The program currently calls for the federal funding to be distributed uniformly state to state - 70 percent for equipment, 18 percent for exercises, 7 percent for planning, 5 percent for training. Under the legislation, states would be able to transfer surplus funds from one category to another to meet their individual needs.

New Hampshire’s Deputy Safety Commissioner John Stephen said the measure would be helpful noting, “This bill will assist states in meeting the ever-growing homeland security needs and in providing local governments with federal funds needed in a more timely and efficient manner.”

Sununu is joined by nine other Senators as a co-sponsor. Additionally, the legislation is supported by The National Governors’ Association, The National Emergency Managers Association, and the National Conference of State Legislators.